As the box to the right indicates, our society has a new Secretary/Treasurer. The indefatigable George Justice, who continues to spread the fashion of bowties across this nation and the globe, has decided to relinquish his post after serving very honorably and capably for eight years. George is now Dean of Humanities at Arizona State University, where his wife Devoney Looser is Professor of English. Though I am sad that they have moved from Columbia, Missouri, I (and the rest of us) wish them both all the best. I am pleased to report that they will continue to play important roles in our society, as they have agreed to host our 2015 meeting. And so our expansion of the “Central Region” continues, as we now encompass North America from Tempe to Montreal.

Our next meeting will be hosted by David Brewer at The Ohio State University on April 4-5, 2014. The guest speaker for the meeting will be Eve Tavor Bannet. Having grown up in central Ohio, I am looking forward to going to Columbus in the spring. Further details about the spring meeting will appear in the spring issue of the News Letter.

One bit of housekeeping: you are receiving this News Letter either as a paper copy, a .pdf file, or both. Please email me at karians@missouri.edu if you wish to change your preferred format(s).

And now for Howard Weinbrot’s summary of the Montreal meeting, followed by abstracts from that meeting.

The Montreal Meeting in Miniature

To say that the Montreal meeting was a success significantly understates reality. Our friends and colleagues performed handsomely: Helen Deutsch guest-speakered with guest speakerly distinction. David Brewer, who knew that he needed to be more than usually brilliant to deserve election as our next president, half-blinded the assembled multitude to make his points. The electorate even gave him a discount on the normal bribe for its votes. The other speakers also performed at the expected highest levels. Our co-presidents were of course properly feted. Peter Sabor and Fiona Ritchie, with their splendid assistant Hillary Haven’s deft supervision, were promptly hoisted to the shoulders of some 750 attendees. The joint presidents were carried off to Pierre Trudeau airport, there to be greeted and congratulated by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper. He had just returned from visiting Buckingham Palace, where he
was instructed on how to change the diapers on the royal baby when Canada was so privileged. Shortly after PM Harper left, though, Trudeau Airport was renamed the Sabtchie International Airport for the next two days. This indeed caused some turmoil as several airplanes overflew the former Trudeau and hardly knew where to go. Some ran out of fuel and ditched in the St. Lawrence River, fortunately sans injury to anything but the pilot’s pride. Others turned away and flew to Toronto, thanks to the wise guidance of eminent Torontonians Corman and Keymer, both of whom had excelled in respective Top Gun competitions. A few brave airline pilots muttered words not permitted to be repeated in this genteel publication and landed anyway. “Sabtchie Schmatskie,” one pilot was heard to say, “down I go.” Fortunately, the Mounties ever alert at Sabtchie International, let the passengers go but restrained the pilot long enough for him to sing praises to the Sabor-Ritchie then past presidency. All hail Sabtchie.

Trouble in McGill

With one exception. Sabtchie did not know that parts of McGill were built upon ancient burial grounds. The massive applause and foot pounding approval of the papers awakened many of the restless nearby sleepers who had been napping since about 1710. Before we knew it, we were being visited, as it were, by very hungry zombies. Since they were Canadian, they were of course polite and since they were sous la terre for so long they spoke French before its academy purification. “Pardonnez-moi,” one said to the JSOCR’s only mono-lingual attendee, “Je suis tellement fain. Je voudrais bien avoir le petit dejeuner sur vostre bras–avec un peu de gris poupon s’il vous plaist.” Before the auditor could say, “huh?” we were almost inundated by many more hungry zombies marching in their usual clumsy lope. It looked serious as all the battle-hardened JSOCRs turned over desks, prepared for a siege, and dutifully followed the Sabtchie leadership and courage. Just in the nick of time, though, the sun set and brought forth the local vampires, who sang in unison, “Alors mes amis. Quelques choses a boire. Depechez-vous.” While the zombies and vampires were nipping at one another, the resourceful Johnsonians quietly removed themselves, shut all the doors, seized a microphone, and began to read scholarly papers in French and English. That of course brought the numen lumen flowing into the room: the vampires collapsed into their old tombs and the zombies collapsed into dust, still proclaiming, “J’ai fain. J’ai fain. Misericorde. Pitié.”

Abstracts from the 2013 meeting in Montreal

The Scaffold in the Marketplace: Samuel Johnson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and the Romance of Authorship

Helen Deutsch (Guest Speaker)

Samuel Johnson haunted the nineteenth-century American literary imagination, and there is no more compelling example of this than Nathaniel Hawthorne, who modeled his uniquely reticent form of authorial exemplarity in Johnson’s sociable shadow. This talk looks at a neglected dimension of Hawthorne’s historical and moral endeavor in his masterpiece The Scarlet Letter by considering his fascination with both the great Augustan moralist and the elusive, mobile, and seminal historical genre that shaped that fascination, the anecdote. The genre of exemplarity par excellence, the anecdote, in Joel Fineman’s words, is also “the literary
form that uniquely lets history happen by virtue of the way it introduces an opening into the teleological, and therefore timeless, narration of beginning, middle, and end.” The anecdote is thus the hole within the whole from which alternative histories, including the true histories known as novels, can emerge. Hawthorne’s lifelong preoccupation with Boswell’s anecdote of Johnson’s penance in Uttoxeter Market, I will argue, roots a uniquely American fictional hero, and a distinctively melancholic mode of American authorship, in Johnson’s English singularity. In other words, just to articulate the talk’s biggest payoff as clearly as possible, Arthur Dimmesdale is Samuel Johnson!

Can the Signboard Speak?

David Brewer

In this talk, I’d like to explore what we can learn about eighteenth-century conceptions of authorship by considering the most frequently viewed kind of authorial image: namely, the shop sign. Booksellers and circulating libraries routinely used authorial heads (including Johnson’s) to mark their establishments in an age before street numbering and so these images were, at least cursorily, seen by tens or hundreds of thousands of people a week. Yet the shop sign canon included many figures whose likenesses were not generally known. How many of us, then or now, could confidently identify Rowe’s or Otway’s Heads? Why then should these signs have been used? How could they have been commercially effective? I’d like to contend that at least here (and I suspect elsewhere in eighteenth-century portraiture) likeness was almost beside the point. Rather, these images were first and foremost emblems of these authors’ reputations and as such functioned more like material personifications (of, say, “Wit” or “Learning” or “Ease”) than any sort of straightforward representation.

The Theatre in the Age of Queen Anne: The Case of George Farquhar

Brian Corman

Critical views of George Farquhar have changed considerably over the past hundred years. This paper explores the connection between those changes and changing constructions of the historical period Farquhar is placed in by critics. The general trajectory has been to look at Farquhar’s comedies first as part of a group of what might be called “long” Restoration comedies of manners, that is, comedies from 1660 to 1710. Alternatively, they were seen as early, transitional works of proto-sentimental comedy. By the late twentieth century, the 1660-1710 period was frequently divided in half, with the death of Charles II as the breakpoint. Farquhar’s plays then joined a group of what are often called “humane comedy.” I propose looking at Farquhar’s plays in the context of the theatre during Anne’s reign. In that context, I argue that Farquhar is the playwright of the period.
Economies of English: Domestic and Linguistic Issues in Elizabeth Hamilton’s *Cottagers of Glenburnie* (1808)

Claire Grogan

Much to Boswell’s chagrin, Johnson dismissed Edinburgh (the “Athens of the North”) in a few scant sentences in his *Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland* (1774) choosing to overlook the many intellectuals there in order to praise the School for the Deaf. Where he did direct his attention was on the propensity of the Scottish to “cling[] to ruins, to dubious past glories” noting how this national characteristic “imped[ed] the productive potential of the present”. He returned to London confident in his city’s supremacy.

Thirty years later Edinburgh, having consolidated its reputation as a cultural and aesthetic metropolis, rivaled London and could less easily be overlooked. In 1804, the British writer Elizabeth Hamilton relocated from England to Edinburgh where she quickly established a salon. Her contact with a variety of professors at the University of Edinburgh, some of whom had crossed paths with Johnson, satisfied her intellectual curiosity and shaped her future publications. *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* (1808) a tale for the inglenook” was prompted by a visit to the Professor of History, Lord Tytler’s, Pentland estate.

A staunch defender of much that was Scottish, Hamilton found that Johnson’s earlier criticism (the thoughtless, stifling nostalgia evident in too many Scots men and women) still applied outside the urban centre amongst the rural poor. So she set to work to change people’s attitudes toward their own past in her instructive “tale for the lower classes”. In this paper I consider how her inclusion of Scottish dialect, her opening up of the Scottish Highlands, and her detailed program of educational and domestic reform pushed her readership to relinquish their unquestioning reverence of the past in favour of a new, industrious and modern Scotland. A Scotland perhaps even Johnson would have viewed more favourably.

Clarifying the Canon of Jonathan Swift’s Poetry

Stephen Karian

This paper explores the challenges in determining the canon of Jonathan Swift’s poetry. Many arguments for or against Swift’s authorship of specific poems have accumulated over the last three centuries, resulting in some confusion over which poems can be reliably attributed to him. Drawing upon the resources of the Swift Poems Project and related material being compiled for the poems volumes of *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift*, I caution against the uncritical assumption that only Swift could have written what are viewed as “Swiftian” poems. In addition, we need to recognize the various motivations that eighteenth-century booksellers had for expanding Swift’s poetic canon.

With such general concerns in mind, I focus on two poems that have held a secure place in the canon: “A Dialogue between an eminent Lawyer and Dr. Swift Dean of St. Patrick’s, being an allusion to the first Satire of the second book of Horace” (1729?) and “An Epistle upon an Epistle from a Certain Doctor to a Certain Great Lord” (1729). I argue that the evidence for Swift’s authorship of these two poems is quite weak, and that barring future discoveries, we should be very cautious about treating either poem as Swift’s. Indeed, how many other so-called “Swiftian” poems are in fact not by Swift?
Johnson and Seditious Libel

Thomas Keymer

Censorship has been a major topic in early modern literary studies since Annabel Patterson’s groundbreaking monograph of 1984, *Censorship and Interpretation*. Yet the impact on the eighteenth century remains quite limited, and despite copious evidence to the contrary, up to and including the pillorying of Daniel Isaac Eaton in 1812, a Whiggish narrative in which the licensing lapse of 1695 inaugurates free expression retains undue power. This paper explores Johnson’s interest in the politics and pragmatics of literary censorship both as an analyst and, arguably, as an exponent of seditious libel. The “Life of Milton” (1781) contains a penetrating but inconclusive discussion of *Areopagitica* in which Johnson asserts the need for press control but rejects the available means: in a licensing or formal pre-censorship system, “power must always be the standard of truth”; in a system of retrospective prosecution, “punishment, though it may crush the author, promotes the book.” This conflicted analysis, which Francis Blackburne mocked as “a curious see-saw of the arguments pro and con,” finds its satirical counterpart in *A Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage* (1739), which for all its hostility to Walpole’s actual and rumoured censorship legislation also anticipates Johnson’s later authoritarianism. Unlike the published text of *London* (1738), which withdraws provocative passage of the manuscript version, *Marmor Norfolciense* (1739) may indeed have strayed far enough beyond the bounds of tolerable dissent to trigger the official interest in Johnson reported by Sir John Hawkins. In the 1869 painting of Johnson’s penance highlighted by Helen Deutsch in her plenary lecture, the pillory—centre stage in the same artist’s earlier (1862) painting of Defoe—remains half-seen in the frame.

Swift and Regime Change, 1714-16

Ashley Marshall

In *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*, Swift recalls the death of Queen Anne as a moment of sudden finality and loss. In one stanza, he records Anne’s death and the Whigs’ alarmingly successful ascendance as a single historical moment, an abrupt change in the political landscape that (in his telling) corrupted religion, debased justice, and badly upset the proper balance of power. Scholars have tended to follow Swift in compacting the months and years following Anne’s death. The usual assumption is—in Maynard Mack’s phrasing—that with Anne’s death Swift’s “game was up, and he knew it.” This is too tidy a tale. My object is to trace the changing moods and shifting allegiances of Swift and his friends between August 1714 and circa late 1716, by which time the Tories had entirely failed to take advantage of Whig disunity.

Swift was frightened, and understandably so: his friends were being arrested and interrogated, or taking flight to France to avoid persecution. That Swift would have been merrily distracted by the newly founded Scriblerus Club is highly implausible, and nothing in the extant record supports such a notion. Swift was in touch not with Pope and Gay but with Tory fellow-travelers who were as distraught by the changing political landscape as he was. His response to the events of 1714-16 is not consistent, but his political outlook during this stormy transition is not as conservative and innocuous as the “Old Whig” brand suggests. His correspondence in this period reflects his tendency to be (as friends said) “Pollitick & Darke.” Swift was not a
committed Jacobite—but we cannot afford to assume that he had no passing radical thoughts. In the right mood, influenced by personalities and relationships and anxieties, frightened by the vindictive measures taken by the Whigs—the seizure of mail, the suspension of habeas corpus—he might conceivably have wondered if Hanover was the only possibility. Scholars routinely note that Swift would not have welcomed a Catholic king, but no one mentions how appalling the Dean would have found the prospect of a Lutheran monarch in bed with the Whigs.

Empire and Entropy at the Royal Academy, 1769

Daniel O’Quinn

Early in 1764, the Society of the Dilettanti, unlike many British institutions in the period following the Seven Years War, discovered that it possessed a financial surplus. As reported in Ionian Antiquities (1769),

Various schemes were proposed for applying part of this Money to some Purpose which might promote Taste, and do Honour to the Society; and after some consideration it was resolved, “That a Person or Persons properly qualified should be sent…to certain Parts of the East…to procure exact Descriptions of the Ruins of such Monuments of Antiquity as are yet to be seen in those Parts.” (ii)

The resulting Ionian mission was the first archeological expedition to Asia Minor to be sponsored and funded by a British institution. The Society chose two experts and a relative newcomer to carry out the task. Richard Chandler, a renowned expert in inscriptions, and Nicholas Revett, the architect famous for his contributions to the Antiquities of Athens (1762), were joined by the 22 year-old William Pars, a portrait painter who was enlisted to take the views of the ruins encountered on the journey.

After returning to London, Pars, Revett and Chandler collaborated on the publication of the first volume of Ionian Antiquities, which documented four sites in the vicinity of Smyrna. Chandler drafted the texts to accompany the numerous plates in the book. The majority of the plates were the province of Revett—the elevations of the four sites, along with the drawings of the decorative elements of the pediments, etc. were chiefly his responsibility. But each of the four sites was introduced with a vedute engraved from Pars’s topographical watercolours and each section had headers and endpieces engraved from Pars’s renderings of sculptural fragments. Some of Pars’s most accomplished watercolours were passed over for the book project, and he chose to show seven small pictures—roughly 12 by 24 inches—at the inaugural exhibition of the Royal Academy of Artists in the spring of 1769.

This essay argues that unresolved questions about imperial governance permeate both the Royal Academy Exhibition and Ionian Antiquities. By comparing Pars’s minor contributions to the exhibition with key history paintings by Benjamin West, Angelica Kaufmann and Joshua Reynolds, I argue that Pars’s capacity to capture entropy and ruin allows him to provide a subtle historical critique of allegorical renderings of Britain as a new Rome or as a new Greece. At stake is the status of liberty both in contemporary understandings of governance and in fantasies of the ancient world. Once we recognize the significance of entropy in this visual rhetoric then it is apparent that the text and engravings of Ionian Antiquities are more than mere records of an archeological expedition. The essay concludes by offering a full-scale reading of Ionian Antiquities that argues that Pars’s entropic designs and Revett’s imaginative reconstructions
operate dialectically to build a phantasmatic bulwark against the incursions of imperial modernity.

“Pox on both your Houses”: The Battle of the Romeos

Leslie Ritchie

Early in the 1750 theatre season, *Romeo and Juliet* was the only show in town: David Garrick’s ardent yet cerebral Romeo, on stage at Drury Lane, was pitted against that of Covent Garden’s handsome Spranger Barry for a tense twelve-night run. This contest’s piquancy derived in part from the public knowledge that Spranger had defected from his articles with Garrick at Drury Lane, and thus, that their contest enacted the play’s thematic obsession with filial disobedience meta-dramatically. This paper will discuss the performance texts, characterize the performances of Barry and Garrick, and consider the financial implications and the media representation of the competition; in short, it will consider the Battle of the Romeos as a case study concerning the effects of dramatized competition on celebrity.

Johnson and the Climate of Posterity

John Sitter

The year when Johnson and Boswell met, 1763, is also the date one recent historian has used to mark the beginning of the Anthropocene Era, the period of anthropogenesis in which the distinction weakens between nature and culture, and thus between science and the humanities. How does our new figurative and literal climate affect the meaning of Johnson’s achievement? How may Johnson’s consciousness of future generations speak to our avoidance of posterity? How might a 21st-century contraction of temporal horizon affect our relation to major 18th-century works and our sense of scholarly vocation? With the short essay “On the Character and Duty of an Academick” and some of Johnson’s other accounts of intellectual work in view, what does it now mean to be responsively Johnsonian?

Historical *Redgauntlet*

Tara Ghoshal Wallace

Walter Scott’s *Redgauntlet* has been characterized as an anomaly among his Scottish novels because its central episode is fictional rather than historical: a Jacobite conspiracy, complete with a secret visit from the Chevalier Charles Edward to England, in 1765. This paper argues that the novel, despite its fictional plot device, is deeply situated in historical realities and contemporary political fantasies. *Redgauntlet*’s Jacobite plot rests on a series of popular riots and political disaffections that reflect actual events in mid-eighteenth-century Britain while the failure of the plot accurately represents the complex character of Stuart loyalty and of the Prince who hopes to ignite that loyalty into rebellion. *Redgauntlet* does not merely meditate on a Jacobite fantasy that has outlived its historical moment; it also tests the new fantasy of a stable and unassailable Hanoverian dynasty.
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